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Montréal Communiqué

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YMCA BACK ALLEY PROGRAM
GETS SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL

Using last summer's back alley program as a springboard, the Montreal YMCA's International Branch has persuaded more than half the pupils in Edward VII School to voluntarily remain after classes.

Instead of dawdling in the streets, or returning to homes where both parents may be working, some 350 children age 8-15, now stay on Mondays and Fridays to participate in supervised recreational activities.

The school is located on Esplanade near Van Horne, in one of Montreal's so-called 'grey areas' of under-employment and sub-standard housing.

Such conditions, aggravated by a scarcity of recreational facilities, tend to foster delinquency, stifle initiative and minimize opportunities for self-development.

The after-school project is designed to help break this cycle by filling a significant part of the leisure-time gap.

The program was conceived and is run by the YMCA, in co-operation with school authorities. It includes gym and sports, arts and crafts, drama and club groups.

Except for swimming, which is carried on in the Y's pool, all activities are on school premises, in a milieu well known to both the youngsters and their parents.

This eliminates the need for any extra travel and relieves anxieties about venturing, unprepared into an environment which, though potentially rewarding, is also unfamiliar.

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